

COMMERCE AND FREE TRADE.

MESSAGE

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN ANSWER TO

A resolution of the House calling for a copy of a letter of the Emperor of France on the subject of Commerce and Free Trade.

FEBRUARY 28, 1860.—Referred to the Committee on Commerce, and ordered to be printed.

To the House of Representatives :

In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 16th instant, requesting a copy of a letter of the Emperor of France upon the subject of commerce and free trade, I transmit a report from the Secretary of State, to whom the resolution was referred.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1860.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, February 25, 1860.

The Secretary of State, to whom was referred the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 16th instant, requesting the President to inform that House “whether a copy of the recent letter of the Emperor of France, upon the subject of commerce and free trade, has been communicated to the Executive by the French government or by our acting minister in France; and, if so, that he transmit to the House a copy of the same, if not incompatible, in his opinion, with the public interest,” has the honor to report to the President that the letter of the Emperor of the French referred to in the resolution has not been communicated to the Executive by the government of France, nor has it been officially communicated by the acting chargé d’affaires of the

United States at Paris. With a despatch, however, of the 17th of January last, Mr. Calhoun transmitted, for the information of this department, a printed copy of the Emperor's letter, taken from the *Moniteur* of the 10th of that month, a translation of which accompanies this report.

Respectfully submitted,

LEW. CASS.

TO THE PRESIDENT.

[Translation.]

The Emperor to the Minister of State.

PALACE OF THE TUILERIES,

January 5, 1860.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE: Notwithstanding the uncertainty which still prevails on certain points of foreign policy, a pacific solution may be confidently looked for. The time has then come to engage our attention with means to give a vast impulse to the various branches of national wealth.

I place before you, with this object, the basis of a programme of which many parts should receive the approval of the Chambers, and on which you will confer with your colleagues, in order to prepare measures the most efficacious to give an active movement to agriculture, industry, and commerce.

For a long time past the truth has been proclaimed that to render commerce flourishing the means of interchange must be multiplied; that without competition industry remains stationary, and keeps up the high prices which prevent the increase of consumption; that without a prospering industry which draws out capital, agriculture itself continues in its infancy. All, then, are connected with the successive development of the elements of public prosperity.

But the important question is to know within what limits the State should favor these different interests, and what measure of preference should be accorded to each of them.

Thus, before developing our foreign commerce by an interchange of products, we must improve our agriculture, and disembarass our industry from all the internal drawbacks which reduce it to a condition of inferiority. At present, not only are our principal exports cramped by a number of restrictive regulations, but even the wellbeing of the industrial class is far from having reached that development which has been attained in a neighboring country. There is, then, only one general system of sound political economy which, in creating material wealth, will spread competency among the industrial classes.

In what relates to agriculture, it must be allowed to participate in the benefits of the institutions for advancing moneys on credit to remove forests extending over the plains, to restore the forest growth to the mountain slopes, to apply year by year considerable sums to the great works of drainage, of irrigation, and of clearing off. Such

works, transforming uncultivated communes into tillage lands, will enrich the communes without impoverishing the State, which will be reimbursed for its advances by sales of part of the lands brought into cultivation.

To encourage industrial production, the raw material indispensable to such industry must be freed from all duties; and such industry must be aided, exceptionally and moderately, as agriculture already has been for drainage, by loans of capital which will help it to work the material to perfection.

One of the greatest services to be rendered to the country is to facilitate the transportation of articles of principal necessity to agriculture and to labor. To this end the Minister of Public Works will cause the channels of communication, canals, roads, and railroads, to be completed as soon as possible, especially those intended to carry fossil coal and manures to places where the wants of productive industry call for them; and he will endeavor to reduce the tariffs, by establishing a fair competition between canals and railroads.

The encouragement of commerce by the multiplication of the means for interchange will then follow as a natural consequence of the preceding measures. The gradual reduction of imposts on articles of large consumption will then become a necessity, as well as the substitution of protective duties in place of the system of prohibition which restricts our commercial relations.

By these measures agriculture will find an outlet for its products; manufacturing skill, freed from internal impediments, aided by the government, stimulated by competition, will contend with advantage against foreign productions; and our commerce, instead of languishing, will receive a new impulse.

Desirous, above all, that order be maintained in our finances, observe how, without disturbing their equilibrium, these ameliorations can be obtained.

The conclusion of the peace has permitted us not to exhaust the amount of the loan. There remains a considerable sum disposable, which, combined with other resources, reaches nearly one hundred and sixty millions. In asking the legislative body to authorize the application of this sum to great public works, and dividing it into three annual payments, there would be about fifty millions a year to be added to the considerable sums already carried annually to the budget.

This resource extraordinary will not only facilitate the prompt completion of railroads and canals, of channels of navigation, of roads, of ports, but enable us to rebuild in less time our cathedrals, our churches, and worthily encourage the sciences, literature, and the arts.

To compensate the loss which the treasury would temporarily suffer by the reduction of duties on raw material and on articles of general consumption, our budget offers the resource of amortization, which it will suffice to suspend until the public revenue accruing from the increase of commerce permit the renewed operation of amortization.

Thus, in brief: Suppression of duties on wool and cotton;

Gradual reductions on sugars and coffees;

Amelioration, energetically followed up, of the means of communication ;

Reduction of tolls on canals, and, by consequence, general reduction on the cost of transportation ;

Loans to agricultural and manufacturing industry ;

Extensive works of public utility ;

Suppression of prohibitions ;

Treaties of commerce with foreign powers.

Such are the general bases of the programme to which I pray you to draw the attention of your colleagues, who should prepare, without delay, the outlines of laws intended to realize it. It will receive, I am firmly convinced, the patriotic support of the Senate and legislative body, emulous to inaugurate with me a new era of peace, and to insure its benefits to France.

For which I pray God have you in his holy keeping.

NAPOLÉON.

TO THE MINISTER OF STATE.